

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: PARK BOARD

Agenda Item #: VI. C.

From: John Keprios, Director
Parks & Recreation Department

Date: December 11, 2012

Subject: Edible Playground Proposal – Lewis Park

Action ☒

Discussion ☐

Information ☐

Action Requested:

Staff requests the Park Board approve the Edible Playground Proposal for Lewis Park in concept. If the Park Board approves the project in concept, staff suggests that the Park Board place the proposal on the Tuesday, January 8, 2013 Park Board meeting agenda and notify resident neighbors within 1,000 feet of Lewis Park and request their input on the proposal and accept public testimony on the proposal at the January 8th meeting.

Information / Background:

This is a staff request to build a 20 foot by 30 foot cedar wood fenced-in area immediately west of the most westerly rectangular athletic field at Lewis Park, 7300 Cahill Road, that would fence in 10 different raised planter beds for planting and harvesting vegetables, two benches and a storage unit similar to Eden Prairie's Edible Playground (please see attached photos). This "Edible Playground" vegetable garden is in my opinion a wonderful initiative brought forward by our Statewide Health Improvement Program staff liaison, Recreation Supervisor Kristin Aarsvold. The program is in keeping with the Do.town initiative and Get Fit City initiative. In her "Action Plan" shown below, Kristin has done an excellent job recruiting volunteers from Dow Water Process Solutions and the Edina Garden Council. She has also secured funding from Dow's "Keep America Beautiful" initiative and from the Edina Resource Center. She has also requested a \$5,000 grant request from the Fairview Foundation and additional funding opportunities may be available through the Bloomington Public Health in conjunction with the Statewide Health Improvement Program.

Edible Playground Action Plan

Submitted By: Kristin Aarsvold, Recreation Supervisor

PREMISE: Over the past ten years, childhood obesity has been on the rise. Unfortunately, 79% of school children do not get the recommended daily allowance of fruits and vegetables. (CDC Youth Risk Behavior survey, 2009) Lewis Park is the proposed site of the City of Edina's first Edible Playground. The park is in south central Edina, near Oak Glen apartments. Oak

Glen is located in a Census tract that has seen significant changes in the past ten years. The racial demographics have shifted with a 294% growth in black residents and 210% growth in Hispanic residents. In addition, this area of Edina has witnessed a 27% decrease in median household income in the past decade. Oak Glen currently welcomes families who are receiving government subsidies for housing, such as Section 8. Census information was provided by the Edina Resource Center.

As recreation providers we have the opportunity to teach gardening skills as a lifelong leisure pursuit as well as make the connection to healthy foods for fueling young bodies for being active. Eden Prairie Parks and Recreation built their first Edible Playground in 2012; plans for an Edible Playground in Edina are based on their efforts. Registered playground program participants will take part in the Edible Playground as well as in the typical playground games and crafts offered for youth ages 6-10. The Edina Playground program runs from June 17- July 25 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1-4 p.m. at Lewis Park. Grants-in-Aid are provided for families who cannot afford the \$36 registration fee. In addition, Garden Camps will be offered the first 3 weeks of August.

GOALS: The goals of creating an Edible Playground are:

1. Provide a hands-on opportunity to teach kids about gardening (food production and a lifelong leisure skill). Goal attained through participants tending garden, visits from Edina Garden Council members and written resources provided for participants and families. Outcome will be measured in end-of-program evaluations.
2. Inspire kids to eat healthy and nutritious food through fun activities and visits from nutritionists to making healthy snacks. Outcome will be measured in end-of-program evaluations.
3. Help kids understand and appreciate the importance of how fresh foods fuel bodies for healthy and active living. Outcome will be measured in end-of-program evaluations.

PROGRAM DESIGN: The Edible Playground will be built with a volunteer pledge from Dow Water Process Solutions employees as a part of their “*Keep America Beautiful Initiative*”. The garden will be maintained by participants in the Edina Playground Program with oversight by Recreation Supervisor, Site Leader and Playground Leaders. A weekly curriculum will be developed using the U of M Extension Service and other available resources like Bloomington Public Health. Parks and Recreation staff will measure outcomes through an end-of-season evaluation. Pizza and salsa plots will be planted as a way to make the connection between the garden and the table. Garden Camps will be offered in August. A “Harvest Dinner” will be held for participants, families, volunteers in late August. Dow Water Process volunteers have pledged to oversee the garden during the off-season as needed.

PROGRAM TIMELINE:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| MARCH 2013 | Funding secured |
| APRIL/MAY | Construction begins |
| LATE MAY | Planting by Dow Water Process Solutions volunteers, participants enrolled at Lewis Park and targeted ELL students/families |
| JUNE- AUGUST | Playground participants and staff maintain, tend and learn about healthy eating during program hours |
| AUGUST | Garden camps and end-of-season "Harvest Dinner" with volunteers, participants, families and community members |
| SEPTEMBER | Put garden to bed |

ESTIMATED BUDGET:**EXPENSES:**

| | |
|---|--|
| \$2,000 | Storage Shed |
| \$2,000 | Fence Materials |
| \$5,000 | Planters |
| (*in-kind labor to build the garden has been pledged by Dow Water Process Solutions volunteers) | |
| \$100 | Soil |
| \$775 | Gravel Base |
| \$350 | Plants/Seeds |
| \$200 | Small Tools and Equipment |
| \$325 | Mailings and postage/newsletter and curriculum printing/signage |
| <u>\$250</u> | Volunteer recognition, video production costs, harvest dinner supplies |
| \$11,000 | Total Expenses |

REVENUES:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| \$1,000 | Pledge from Dow's "Keep America Beautiful" Initiative |
| \$1,500 | Pledge from Edina Resource Center |
| \$5,000 | At this time a \$5,000 grant has been submitted to the Fairview Foundation; potential funding has been requested from Bloomington Public Health through the Statewide Health Improvement Program. |
| <u>\$3,500</u> | Parks and Recreation Department 2013 operating budget. |
| \$11,000 | Total Revenues |

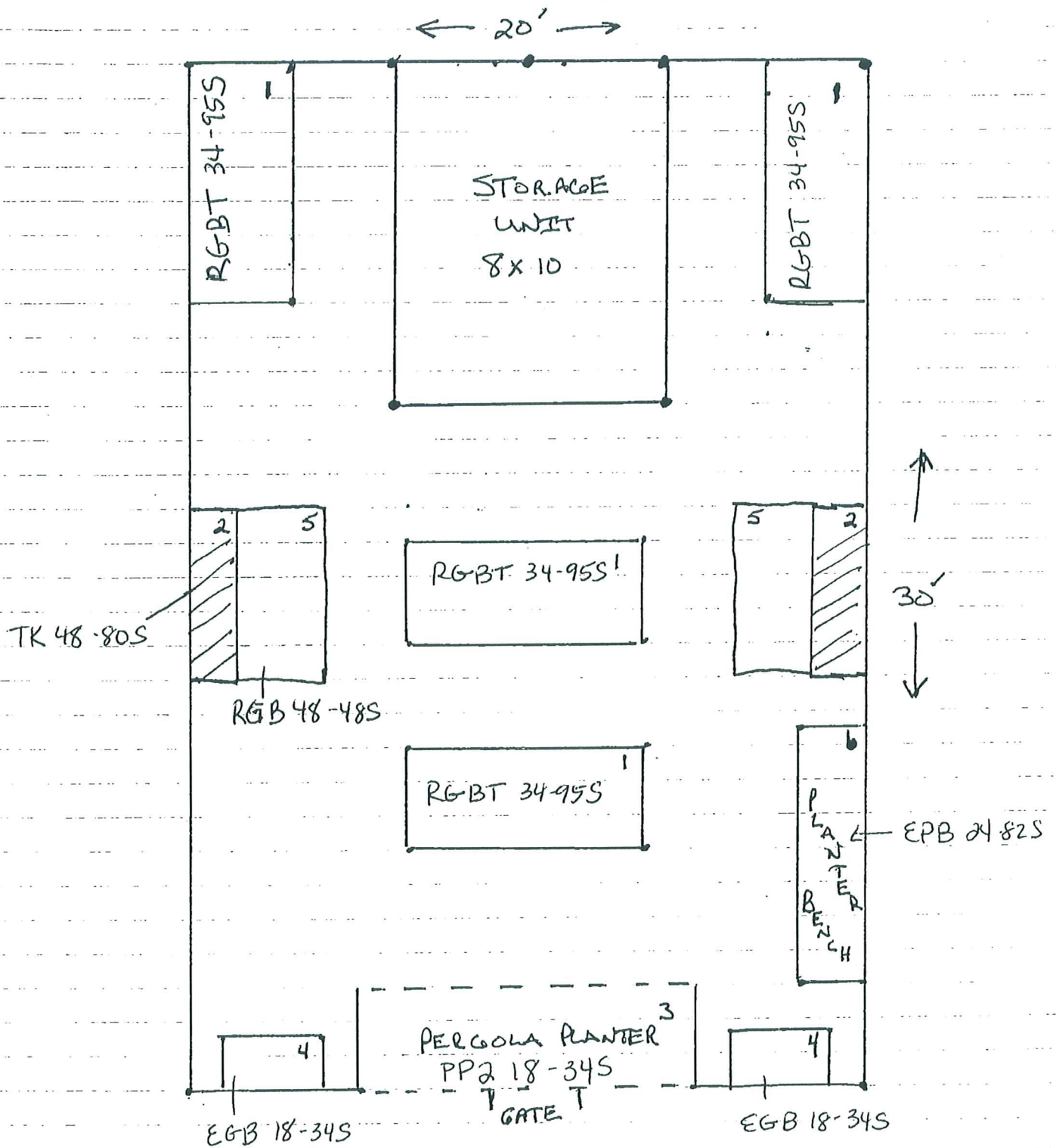
Long- term sustainability includes \$500 per year for seeds/plants/soils and maintenance. This will be folded into program expenses partially covered by program and camp fees.

SUMMARY:

As Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, I am proud to recommend this proposal which was brought forward by Recreation Supervisor Kristin Aarsvold on her own initiative. I believe it is good use of this park land and a wonderful program for all the reasons she has outlined in her Action Plan. I recommend that the Park Board support the proposal in concept and take the matter to the next step in the public process as proposed by staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Hand-drawn Layout Diagram of the Proposed Edible Garden
- Aerial Map of Lewis Park Showing Location of the Proposed Edible Garden
- Two Photos of Eden Prairie's Edible Garden





Lewis Park

Proposed Site for Edible Playground

Lewis Park

7300



Open Space 1

Map created with ArcIMS - Copyright (C) LOGIS GIS 2005



Eden Prairie's Edible Playground Est. 2012



